

**The Effectiveness of the Kiosk Program  
Cannot Be Determined**

**August 2004**

**Reference Number: 2004-40-151**

**This report has cleared the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration disclosure review process and information determined to be restricted from public release has been redacted from this document.**



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20220

INSPECTOR GENERAL  
for TAX  
ADMINISTRATION

August 26, 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMISSIONER, WAGE AND INVESTMENT DIVISION

*David R. Decker*

FROM: (for) Gordon C. Milbourn III  
Acting Deputy Inspector General for Audit

SUBJECT: Final Audit Report - The Effectiveness of the Kiosk Program  
Cannot Be Determined (Audit # 200440022)

This report presents the results of our review of the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Kiosk<sup>1</sup> Program. The overall objective of this review was to determine whether the Kiosk Program provides effective customer service to taxpayers.

The IRS introduced the Kiosk Program in 1998 with seven kiosks located in three states. The Program has since expanded to 38<sup>2</sup> kiosks located in 20 states. Locations of the kiosks include Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC),<sup>3</sup> post offices, Federal and state offices, libraries, and a mini-mall. The Kiosk Program is part of the IRS' efforts to broaden its use of electronic interactions by providing more education and assistance through convenient, easy to use self-assistance channels.

The current goal of the Kiosk Program is to provide taxpayers with an alternative method of obtaining Federal and state tax forms and answers to frequently asked tax questions in English and Spanish. The IRS' vision for the future of the Kiosk Program is to provide taxpayers with the ability to self-sufficiently resolve their own tax needs and decrease the need for taxpayers to seek live assistance from the IRS at TACs. This would allow the IRS to refocus resources from the traditional prefilling work of assisting taxpayers at the TACs to providing face-to-face assistance to taxpayers with compliance issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Kiosks consist of a Computer Processing Unit, touch-screen monitor, and printer.

<sup>2</sup> One kiosk, purchased January 2004, is still in a warehouse because a determination has yet to be made on its placement.

<sup>3</sup> The TACs are IRS field offices offering taxpayers face-to-face tax assistance.

The IRS cannot determine whether the Kiosk Program provides effective customer service or is cost-effective because of insufficient internal controls and management oversight. Although the Kiosk Program has been in place since 1998, the IRS has yet to develop guidelines or processes to efficiently and effectively monitor the Program. For example, internal controls to ensure the Program is operating as intended have not been developed. In addition, processes have not been developed to:

- Measure whether the Kiosk Program is meeting its goal of providing taxpayers with the ability to self-sufficiently resolve tax issues.
- Ensure information provided on kiosks is current, accurate, and consistent.
- Ensure kiosks are placed in the most optimal locations.
- Educate taxpayers on the benefits and location of the kiosks.

The Kiosk Program plays an integral role in the IRS' future concept of self-assistance customer service. To date, the IRS has spent approximately \$685,900 to purchase, update, and maintain kiosks without the ability to ensure taxpayers or the IRS have benefited from these expenditures. During the review, results were shared with IRS management. In response, management initiated discussions with responsible kiosk vendors and internal stakeholders to begin to address the concerns raised and to obtain suggestions for improving and enhancing the Program.

However, additional actions are needed to ensure the Kiosk Program provides effective customer service. We recommended the Commissioner, Wage and Investment Division, develop guidelines and strategies to enable the efficient and effective monitoring of the Kiosk Program. Processes need to be developed to monitor taxpayer usage and satisfaction; ensure information is current, accurate, and consistent; monitor kiosk functionality; optimally place kiosks; and educate taxpayers on the benefits and locations of kiosks.

Management's Response: IRS management is pleased we acknowledged the critical role the Kiosk Program plays in the IRS' future concept of self-assistance customer service. They recognize improvements are needed in the Program and agree with our recommendations. Corrective actions will include:

- Developing guidelines for analyzing kiosk information to identify trends, issues, and areas needing improvement.
- Installing the Customer Satisfaction Survey on all kiosks and using survey results to identify additional services or information needed.
- Requiring annual certification that the information on the kiosks is current and accurate.
- Using the Service Delivery Model (SDM)<sup>4</sup> to determine the optimal location of kiosks.

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<sup>4</sup> The SDM provides data regarding where IRS services are located in relation to where taxpayers live.

- Developing a communication plan to educate taxpayers on the benefits and locations of kiosks.

Management's complete response to the draft report is included as Appendix VI.

Copies of this report are also being sent to the IRS managers affected by the report recommendations. Please contact me at (202) 622-6510 if you have questions or Michael R. Phillips, Assistant Inspector General for Audit (Wage and Investment Income Programs), at (202) 927-0597.

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## The Effectiveness of the Kiosk Program Cannot Be Determined

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### Background

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The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) introduced the Kiosk<sup>1</sup> Program in 1998 with seven kiosks located in three states. The Program has since expanded to 38 kiosks located in 20 states.<sup>2</sup> (See Appendix V for the specific states where kiosks are located.) Locations of the kiosks include Taxpayer Assistance Centers (TAC),<sup>3</sup> post offices, Federal and state offices, libraries, and a mini-mall.

The Kiosk Program is part of the IRS' efforts to broaden its use of electronic interactions by providing more education and assistance through convenient, easy to use self-assistance channels. The current goal of the Kiosk Program is to provide taxpayers with an alternative method of obtaining Federal and state tax forms and answers to frequently asked tax questions. This assistance is also to be provided in Spanish. The IRS' vision for the future of the Kiosk Program is to provide taxpayers with the ability to self-sufficiently resolve their own tax needs and decrease the need for taxpayers to seek live assistance from the IRS at TACs. This is to be accomplished by providing more kiosk locations in both staffed and virtual TACs,<sup>4</sup> as well as storefronts. Providing taxpayers with the ability to self-sufficiently resolve their own tax needs will then allow the IRS to refocus resources from the traditional prefilling work of assisting taxpayers at the TACs to providing face-to-face assistance to taxpayers with compliance issues.

The IRS has contracts with outside vendors to purchase the kiosks, including the computer hardware and software that run the kiosks. Once the kiosks are purchased and placed, the vendors assist the IRS in performing informational updates and capturing data on usage and maintenance.

This review was performed at the IRS Customer Assistance, Relationships, and Education function in the Wage and Investment Division Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, with visits to the following sites where kiosks are located:

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<sup>1</sup> Kiosks consist of a Computer Processing Unit, touch-screen monitor, and printer.

<sup>2</sup> One kiosk, purchased January 2004, is still in a warehouse because a determination has yet to be made on its placement.

<sup>3</sup> The TACs are IRS field offices offering taxpayers face-to-face tax assistance.

<sup>4</sup> Virtual TACs offer taxpayers technology that enables face-to-face assistance using video-conferencing capability.

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El Segundo, California; Hartford and Waterbury, Connecticut; Edison, New Jersey; and Columbus, Ohio, during the period February through May 2004. The audit was conducted in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards*. Detailed information on our audit objective, scope, and methodology is presented in Appendix I. Major contributors to the report are listed in Appendix II.

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### Controls or Processes to Efficiently and Effectively Monitor the Program Have Not Been Developed

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The IRS cannot determine whether the Kiosk Program provides effective customer service or is cost-effective because of insufficient internal controls and management oversight. Although the Kiosk Program has been in place since 1998, the IRS has yet to develop guidelines or processes to efficiently and effectively monitor the Program.

#### **No system of internal controls exists to ensure the Kiosk Program is operating as intended and meeting its goals and objectives**

There are no documented internal controls, guidelines, policies, or procedures for the Kiosk Program to measure and monitor whether the Program is meeting its goal of providing effective customer service. For example, balanced measures and performance goals have not been established, an analysis has not been performed to determine if the costs expended equate to the customer service benefit provided to taxpayers, and a strategy has not been developed outlining long-term goals as well as the measures to be used to determine whether the goals are being met.

#### **No process exists to monitor kiosk usage and taxpayer satisfaction**

Although kiosks have the ability to capture data on both taxpayer usage and taxpayer satisfaction, the IRS does not currently analyze these data to identify trends or areas for improvement. Each kiosk has software provided by the vendor that tabulates usage characteristics including language, tax form viewed, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) viewed or printed. In addition, some but not all kiosks contain a survey to capture information on the taxpayers' experiences using the kiosks. The IRS was aware of this capability but has not used the data to monitor the Program.

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### **No process exists to ensure information provided on kiosks is current, accurate, or consistent**

Visits to the five kiosks sampled<sup>5</sup> identified that the information provided on them was not current or accurate. In addition, the information was not consistent from kiosk to kiosk. For example:

- One kiosk inaccurately stated the Federal tax return filing deadline as April 17, 2004, instead of April 15, 2004.
- One kiosk provided FAQs only in English, even though the IRS is required to provide them in Spanish. Based on discussions with the vendor, this condition exists on 22 (58 percent) of the 38 kiosks nationwide. Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency* (LEP),<sup>6</sup> was put in place to ensure the programs and activities that Federal Government agencies normally provide in English are accessible to the LEP population. However, the IRS has not ensured all kiosks provide information in languages to meet the needs of the LEP population.
- One kiosk had outdated FAQs. The FAQs available related to tax law for Tax Year 2001 rather than for the current Tax Year 2003. Based on discussions with the vendor, this condition exists on 22 (58 percent) of the 38 kiosks nationwide.

Because the kiosks are stand-alone and not networked or connected to the Internet, manual updates are required. IRS management stated that the vendors responsible for maintaining the kiosks were also responsible for performing these updates. However, there is no guidance on performing updates or controls for the IRS to ensure the kiosks are being timely updated with the same accurate information.

In addition, one kiosk sampled was found not to be operating. Management was unaware the kiosk was not functioning. There was no internal process to monitor kiosk

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<sup>5</sup> We visited 5 of the 38 kiosks the IRS had listed in inventory.

<sup>6</sup> Executive Order 13166, *Improving Access to Services for Persons With Limited English Proficiency*, signed by President Clinton on August 11, 2000.

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functionality or an external process for taxpayers to report problems with a kiosk.

### **No process exists to ensure kiosks are placed in the most optimal locations**

Since the establishment of the Kiosk Program, placement has been based on criteria established at the time the kiosks were purchased. Some kiosks are located in areas that no longer meet current coverage goals. For example:

- From 1998 to 1999, kiosks were placed in the TACs to reduce wait times. Thirteen kiosks are currently colocated with TACs or an IRS field office.
- From 2001 to 2003, kiosks were placed in locations based on recommendations of the IRS' design teams. The design teams recommended 49 kiosks be placed in 21 states.
- Current placement of kiosks is based on a model that targets geographic areas in an attempt to provide 85 percent<sup>7</sup> of taxpayers that file a tax return within a geographic area with the ability to obtain customer assistance within a 45-minute commute. Several kiosks are placed in areas where the service delivery exceeds 85 percent and may no longer be necessary.

Additionally, placement of kiosks has not involved internal stakeholders such as the Multilingual Initiative Project and the Stakeholder Partnerships, Education, and Communication Offices, both of which are instrumental in delivering customer service to underserved segments of the taxpaying public. One kiosk the IRS purchased has been in a warehouse since January 2004 because a determination has yet to be made on its placement.

Further, the IRS has not developed a strategy to identify locations for future placement of kiosks. No budgetary commitments have been made outlining anticipated growth in the Program. Instead, kiosks are purchased at the end of the fiscal year with excess funds and the IRS then attempts to identify a location for placement.

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<sup>7</sup> The coverage percentage is the number of filers in a geographic location within a 45-minute commute of a service delivery location. The model is called the Service Delivery Model.

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### **No process exists to educate taxpayers on the benefits and locations of the kiosks**

The only vehicle that educates taxpayers about the IRS Kiosk Program and kiosk locations is on the IRS web site ([IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov)) in English but not in Spanish. This information is not always current. As of April 1, 2004, the IRS had expanded service to include 38 kiosks in 20 states, but as of April 16, 2004, the web site provided information on only 30 kiosks.

IRS.gov may not be the most effective method to educate taxpayers about kiosks since the information on kiosks is the same information available on IRS.gov. If taxpayers have access to IRS.gov to find a kiosk, they would not need to use the services a kiosk offers.

### **Insufficient internal controls and managerial oversight resulted in inefficient use of IRS resources**

Inadequate management oversight, including insufficient internal controls, policies, and procedures, have resulted in the inability of the IRS to ensure the Kiosk Program is meeting its goal of providing an alternative method for taxpayers to seek customer service. If management does not improve oversight and internal controls, there is a risk that the IRS' vision for the future of the Kiosk Program will not be met.

The Government Accountability Office (formerly the General Accounting Office) *Standards of Internal Controls in the Federal Government*<sup>8</sup> state that internal controls are a major part of managing an organization. They comprise the plans, methods, and procedures used to meet missions, goals, and objectives.

To date, the IRS has spent approximately \$685,900 to purchase, update, and maintain kiosks without the ability to ensure taxpayers or the IRS have benefited from these expenditures. The IRS estimates that 54 million taxpayers reside in the states where kiosks are located. Without ensuring the information provided is useful, the IRS may be increasing taxpayer burden should taxpayers rely on inaccurate information.

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<sup>8</sup> *Standards of Internal Controls in the Federal Government* (GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1 dated November 1999).

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As the IRS moves forward in developing the necessary processes to effectively and efficiently monitor its Kiosk Program, it might refer to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as a best practice on the use of kiosks. The HUD has demonstrated the ability to deliver effective customer service by placing web-based kiosks in public areas nationwide to provide information on a 24 hour/7 day a week basis to citizens who do not have access to the Internet. The HUD's web-based kiosks are networked and Internet-enabled, allowing the kiosks to be updated quickly and easily, and keeping them consistent with the HUD web site. All content is printable and available in both English and Spanish. The HUD's kiosks have been recognized with the prestigious "Pioneer Award" by e-Gov and with the Excellence in Government Award.

During the review, results were shared with IRS management. In response, management initiated discussions with responsible kiosk vendors and internal stakeholders to begin to address the concerns raised and to obtain suggestions for improving and enhancing the Program. However, additional actions are needed to ensure the Kiosk Program provides effective customer service.

### **Recommendations**

The Commissioner, Wage and Investment Division, should:

1. Develop guidelines and strategies to enable the efficient and effective oversight of the Kiosk Program including processes to:
  - a. Monitor kiosk usage and taxpayer satisfaction to ensure the Kiosk Program is meeting its goals.
  - b. Ensure the information provided on kiosks is current, accurate, and consistent.
  - c. Monitor kiosk functionality including enabling taxpayers to report problems with kiosks.
  - d. Ensure kiosks are placed in the most optimal locations, including coordination with key internal stakeholders.

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Management's Response: IRS management agreed with this recommendation and will take the following corrective actions:

- Develop guidelines for analyzing usage reports and other information on the kiosks to identify trends, issues, and areas needing improvement.
  - Install the Customer Satisfaction Survey on all kiosks and use the survey results to identify additional services or information needed to help taxpayers meet their tax obligations.
  - Develop a Kiosk Checklist requiring field personnel to certify annually that the information on the kiosks is current and accurate.
  - Develop a standardized operational review guide for the Kiosk Program to ensure consistency in the review process.
  - Use the Service Delivery Model (SDM) to determine the optimal location of kiosks. The SDM provides data on where IRS services are located in relation to where taxpayers live.
2. Develop a process to educate taxpayers on the benefits of the Kiosk Program, including the locations of kiosks.

Management's Response: IRS management agreed with this recommendation and will determine the feasibility of expanding access to IRS information using HUD kiosks, develop a communication plan to educate taxpayers on the benefits and locations of kiosks, and ensure information on the kiosks meets the needs of taxpayers who do not speak English.

**Detailed Objective, Scope, and Methodology**

The overall objective of this review was to determine whether the Kiosk<sup>1</sup> Program provides effective customer service for taxpayers. To accomplish this objective, we:

- I. Determined whether the goals and strategies of the Kiosk Program agree with the goals and strategies of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Wage and Investment Division and whether the IRS has an effective method to monitor the Program.
  - A. Obtained and reviewed IRS guidance and documentation to identify the intended benefits of the Kiosk Program for both taxpayers and the IRS and held discussions with management to determine whether these benefits are being realized.
  - B. Obtained any reports or documentation on the Kiosk Program (e.g., documents showing how the IRS tracks the expenses, provides oversight, and measures progress and success).
- II. Determined whether the information provided on kiosks is current, accurate, and consistent.
  - A. Determined whether the IRS has an effective process to ensure information contained on kiosks is current, accurate, and consistent. We interviewed vendors to verify the process.
  - B. Selected a judgmental sample of 5 of 38<sup>2</sup> kiosk locations in California, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Ohio to review the information contained on the kiosks to determine whether the information was current, accurate, and consistent among kiosks. We selected the El Segundo, California; Edison, New Jersey; and Columbus, Ohio, kiosk locations because we were able to perform the test while performing an audit test for another ongoing audit. We selected the Hartford and Waterbury, Connecticut, kiosk locations because of their proximity to our Andover Office.
  - C. If the kiosks were found to contain information that was not current, accurate, and consistent, determined why and attempted to assess the effect(s) on taxpayers and the IRS.
- III. Determined whether the IRS effectively captures usage and measures taxpayer satisfaction with the Kiosk Program by holding discussions with management.

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<sup>1</sup> Kiosks consist of a Computer Processing Unit, touch-screen monitor, and printer.

<sup>2</sup> One kiosk, purchased January 2004, is still in a warehouse because a determination has yet to be made on its placement.

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- IV. Determined whether the IRS places kiosks in the most optimal locations and educates taxpayers on their benefits and locations by holding discussions with management, locating kiosks, and determining the accuracy of management information.
- V. Determined the effect(s) on taxpayers and the IRS.

**Major Contributors to This Report**

Michael Phillips, Assistant Inspector General for Audit (Wage and Investment Income Programs)

Randee Cook, Director

Russell Martin, Audit Manager

Grace Terranova, Lead Auditor

Jean Bell, Auditor

**Report Distribution List**

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### Outcome Measures

This appendix presents detailed information on the measurable impact that our recommended corrective actions will have on tax administration. This benefit will be incorporated into our Semiannual Report to the Congress.

#### Type and Value of Outcome Measure:

- Inefficient Use of Resources – Actual; approximately \$685,900 in purchase, update, and maintenance costs for kiosks<sup>1</sup> (see page 2).

#### Methodology Used to Measure the Reported Benefit:

We analyzed the Kiosk Investment Template provided by Field Assistance office management detailing the purchase costs and dates, along with annual maintenance costs, for the 38 kiosks purchased since 1998.

We determined the cost to purchase 38 kiosks since 1998 to be over \$465,600 as follows:

- We determined the number of kiosks purchased each year:
    - 7 kiosks purchased in 1998:  
 $\$8,000/\text{kiosk} \times 6 \text{ kiosks} = \$48,000$   
 $\$13,895 \times 1 \text{ kiosk} = \$13,895$   
 $\$48,000 + \$13,895 = \$61,895$
    - 8 kiosks purchased in 1999:  
 $\$11,233/\text{kiosk} \times 1 \text{ kiosk} = \$11,233$   
 $\$11,250/\text{kiosk} \times 4 \text{ kiosks} = \$45,000$   
 $\$12,358/\text{kiosk} \times 2 \text{ kiosks} = \$24,716$   
 $\$12,900/\text{kiosk} \times 1 \text{ kiosk} = \$12,900$   
 $\$11,233 + \$45,000 + \$24,716 + \$12,900 = \$93,849$
    - 7 kiosks purchased in 2001:  $\$13,520/\text{kiosk} \times 7 \text{ kiosks} = \$94,640$
    - 16 kiosks purchased in 2003:  $\$13,454.38/\text{kiosk} \times 16 \text{ kiosks} = \$215,270.08$
- $\$61,895 + \$93,849 + \$94,640 + \$215,270.08 = \$465,654.08$

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<sup>1</sup> Kiosks consist of a Computer Processing Unit, touch-screen monitor, and printer.

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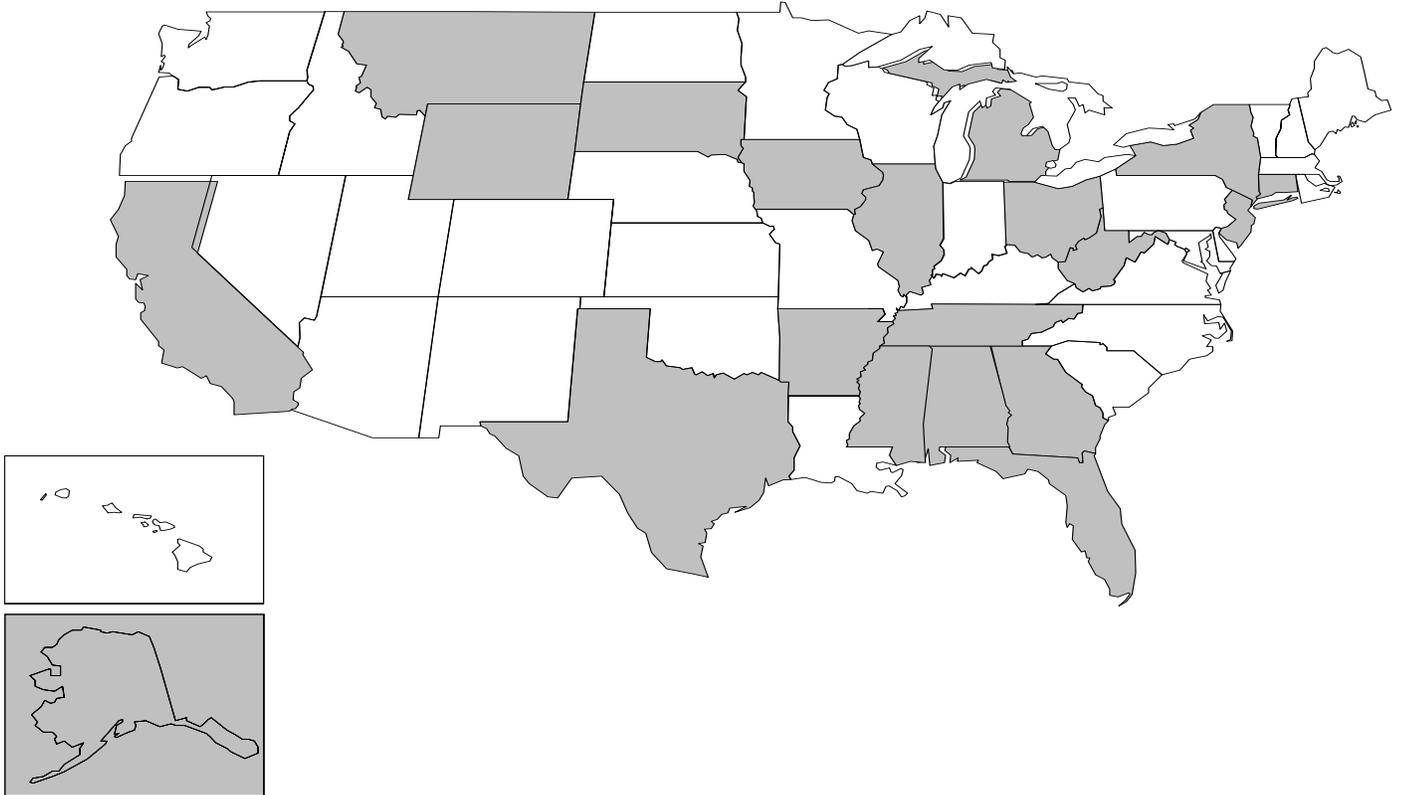
We determined the update and maintenance costs of the kiosks since 1998 to be over \$220,200 based on the following:

- We determined the number of years each kiosk has been owned by the IRS. We subtracted the 1-year service agreement to determine the number of years the IRS paid for upgrades and maintenance. We then multiplied these years by the annual flat rate maintenance and upgrade cost per kiosk by vendor as provided by the IRS.
  - 7 kiosks purchased in 1998: 5 years paid at \$2,622/year = \$13,110  
\$13,110 x 7 kiosks = \$91,770
  - 8 kiosks purchased in 1999: 4 years paid at \$2,622/year = \$10,488  
\$10,488 x 8 kiosks = \$83,904
  - 7 kiosks purchased in 2001: 2 years paid at \$3,181.43 = \$6,362.86  
\$6,362.86 x 7 kiosks = \$44,540.02
  - 16 kiosks purchased in 2003: 0 years paid

$\$91,770 + \$83,904 + \$44,540.02 + \$0 = \$220,214.02$

We determined the combined purchase, update, and maintenance costs since 1998 to be approximately \$685,900 ( $\$465,654.08 + \$220,214.02 = \$685,868.10$ ).

Kiosk Locations by State



Kiosks are located in the following cities and states: Akron, Ohio; Beckley, West Virginia; Bethel, Alaska; Brooklyn, New York; Butte, Montana; Cheektowaga (Buffalo), New York; Chicago, Illinois; Cincinnati, Ohio; Columbus, Ohio; Dallas, Texas; Dayton, Ohio; Dubuque, Iowa; Edison, New Jersey; El Segundo, California; Fairview Heights, Illinois; Flushing (Queens), New York; Galveston, Texas; Gillette, Wyoming; Grantsville, Georgia; Hartford, Connecticut; Heber Spring, Arkansas; Juneau, Alaska; Key West, Florida; Lansing, Michigan; Manchester, Tennessee; McAllen, Texas; Miles City, Montana; Nome, Alaska; Pierre, South Dakota; Pontiac, Michigan; Rainbow City, Alabama; Redwood City, California; Rochester, New York; Springfield, Illinois; Syracuse, New York; Union, Mississippi; and Waterbury, Connecticut.

The Effectiveness of the Kiosk Program Cannot Be Determined

Appendix VI

Management's Response to the Draft Report



COMMISSIONER  
WAGE AND INVESTMENT DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY  
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE  
ATLANTA, GA 30308

RECEIVED  
AUG 13 2004

AUG 13 2004

MEMORANDUM FOR TREASURY INSPECTOR GENERAL FOR  
TAX ADMINISTRATION

FROM:

Henry O. Lamar, Jr.  
Commissioner, Wage and Investment Division

SUBJECT:

Draft Audit Report – The Effectiveness of the Kiosk Program  
Cannot Be Determined (Audit #200440022)

I reviewed your draft report and am pleased you acknowledged the critical role the Kiosk Program plays in the IRS' future concept of self-assistance customer service. As we shift assistance activities to self-service mechanisms, the Kiosk Program is integral to providing taxpayers with an alternative method of obtaining Federal and state tax forms and answers to frequently asked tax questions in locations where traditional offices are not located. The IRS introduced the Kiosk Program in 1998 with seven kiosks located in three states. We have since expanded service to include 38 kiosks in 20 states. Kiosks are located in post offices, libraries, Federal and state offices, and Taxpayer Assistance Centers.

We contract with outside vendors to purchase kiosks. The vendors are required to update information on the kiosks and provide usage and maintenance reports to the IRS. The IRS employees and outside site coordinators are required to ensure kiosks are operable and to report problems to the vendors for resolution.

We recognize improvements are needed in the Kiosk Program and agree with your findings and recommendations. I appreciate your recognition of the corrective actions we initiated during the course of the review. We immediately contacted the kiosk vendor to correct the filing date deadline to April 15, 2004, and to remove the outdated frequently asked questions. We also initiated discussions with the vendors to identify suggestions and additional procedures needed to ensure that the information on all kiosks is current and accurate.

However, we were unable to validate your finding that one kiosk was not operational. The kiosk in question, located in Waterbury, CT, was tested by the site coordinator and found to be operating as intended. Field Assistance Area contacts are held

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responsible for ensuring all kiosks are operable, and we will continue to remind our employees of this requirement.

To further ensure we meet our goal of providing effective customer service, we are developing a Kiosk Checklist requiring field personnel to certify annually that the kiosks are operating as intended and that the information is current and accurate.

We are also reassessing our long-term strategy for kiosks and other initiatives designed to provide taxpayers with self-service delivery methods. When completed, our strategy will identify the long term goals, procedures, and measures needed to ensure taxpayers not requiring face-to-face assistance have alternative self-service tools.

I reviewed the measurable benefits and agree that they appear to be an accurate projection based on the observations contained in the report.

Our corrective actions are detailed in the attachment. If you need additional information, please let me know or contact Ellen M. Cimaglia, Director, Field Assistance, Wage and Investment Customer Assistance, Relationships and Education, at (404) 338-7141.

Attachment

## The Effectiveness of the Kiosk Program Cannot Be Determined

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Attachment

### **RECOMMENDATION 1**

Develop guidelines and strategies to enable the efficient and effective oversight of the Kiosk Program, including processes to:

- Monitor kiosk usage and taxpayer satisfaction.
- Ensure that the information on kiosks is current, accurate, and consistent.
- Monitor kiosk functionality.
- Ensure kiosks are placed in the most optimal locations.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTION**

We will complete the following actions to address the above recommendations:

- a. Develop guidelines for analyzing usage reports and other information on the kiosks to identify trends, issues, and areas needing improvement.
- b. Install the newly developed Customer Satisfaction Survey on all kiosks. We will use the survey results to determine taxpayer satisfaction with the services received and to determine whether additional services or information is needed to help taxpayers meet their tax obligations.
- c. Develop a Kiosk Checklist requiring field personnel to certify annually that the information on the kiosks is current, accurate, and the kiosks are operating as intended.
- d. Develop a standardized operational review guide for the Kiosk Program to ensure consistency in the review process.
- e. Use the Service Delivery Model (SDM) to determine the optimal location of kiosks. The SDM provides data on where our services are located in relation to where taxpayers live. We use the SDM to determine if we are meeting our goal of providing service to 85 percent of taxpayers within a 45-minute commute of a Taxpayer Assistance Center or alternate delivery vehicle. Alternate delivery vehicles include kiosks, mobile units, and alternate sites such as shopping malls and community centers.

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### **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

- a. August 12, 2005
- b. August 12, 2005
- c. January 14, 2005
- d. January 14, 2005
- e. Ongoing

### **RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL**

Director, Field Assistance, Wage and Investment Division

### **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS MONITORING PLAN**

We will monitor adherence to our kiosk procedures and guidelines during operational reviews to ensure kiosks are operating as intended and located in the most optimal locations.

### **RECOMMENDATION 2**

Develop a process to educate taxpayers on the benefits of the Kiosk Program, including the locations of kiosks.

### **CORRECTIVE ACTION**

To educate taxpayers on the benefits and locations of kiosks, we will:

- a. Work with the Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and Communication (SPEC) function to initiate discussions with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to determine the feasibility of using HUD's kiosks to expand access to IRS information.
- b. Work with the Earned Income Tax Credit Office, Wage and Investment's Communications and Liaison Office, and the SPEC function to develop a communication plan to educate taxpayers on the benefits and locations of kiosks. We believe this effort will be very beneficial in reaching taxpayers needing the services offered on kiosks.
- c. Work with the Multilingual Initiative (MLI) Project Office to ensure information on the kiosks meets the needs of taxpayers who do not speak English. We will use the information maintained by the MLI Project Office to identify languages, other than Spanish, needed on the kiosks.

## The Effectiveness of the Kiosk Program Cannot Be Determined

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### **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

March 15, 2005

### **RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL**

Director, Field Assistance, Wage and Investment Division

### **CORRECTIVE ACTIONS MONITORING PLAN**

We will monitor adherence to our kiosk procedures and guidelines during operational reviews to ensure taxpayers are being educated on the benefits and locations of kiosks.